

Vassar Dance Department

Fall 2023 Newsletter



Save the Date!

November 16-18:

Vassar Repertory Dance
Theatre Fall Concert

December 4th:

Student Showcase
Performance

Reserve all tickets at vassardance.tix.com

We're off to a great start to the year here in Kenyon! Read on to learn more about the happenings in the Vassar Dance Department this semester!

Please contact Helen Ambrose
(hambrose@vassar.edu) to be added to the email list.



On Faculty:

Selina Chau

Selina Chau, former Soloist and Choreographer-in-Residence with Hong Kong Ballet, earned her MFA in Dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and is an ABT certified teacher. Known for her roles in classical and contemporary repertoire, she teaches ballet at NYU Tisch, Ballet Academy East, and New York Dance Project.

On Faculty:

Chelsea Acree

Chelsea Acree received her BFA from Purchase College. She danced with the Mark Morris Dance Group, and was a primary teacher on tour and at the company's school in Brooklyn, NY, teaching modern dance to professional, pre-professional, and community groups of all ages and abilities. She is also a certified Dance for Parkinson's Disease instructor.



New Works: Janice Rosario



Janice Rosario is a nationally recognized contemporary dance choreographer, educator, and activist. Janice has been commissioned by numerous prestigious institutions throughout the United States including Barnard College/Columbia University, The Alvin Ailey/Fordham University BFA Program, Columbia University, and Hunter College. When not in the studio, she is running her nonprofit, The Good Neighbor Collective Inc, to support and empower those underserved in our communities.

On Staff: Jonathan Gorst



Jonathan Gorst received his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at the University of Northern Colorado. Jonathan has served as Music Director for the national tours of CATS, The Color Purple, and The Phantom of the Opera, as well as playing and conducting for dozens of Broadway, regional and national tours. Over his 25 year career, he has worked with the leaders of the industry from New York to Las Vegas and on the International Stage. He joins the Dance Department staff as an accompanist and music manager.

New Works: Shannon Gillen

Shannon Gillen is the founder, artistic director, and choreographer of a contemporary dance company: VIM VIGOR. Shannon has had an extensive career as a dancer and choreographer in NYC and Europe. Her choreographic work, known for its emotional expression and fierce physicality, has received multiple awards and is commissioned across the USA, Canada, Central America, South America, and Europe.



In Memoriam: Ray Cook Tribute

A tribute was held to honor Professor Ray Cook, a beloved dance professor who passed away early this year. Professor Cook was known internationally for his work in dance notation. He founded VRDT and staged many iconic dance works for the company. Dozens of alums, former colleagues and friends were in attendance. The tribute included spoken remembrances and a ballet performance by three VRDT dancers.



Events: Philadanco!



Philadanco! performed at Vassar after a short residency on campus.

Philadanco!, The Philadelphia Dance Company, is celebrated for its innovation, creativity, and preservation of predominantly African-American traditions in dance. Vassar Repertory Dance Theatre students attended a master class given by two Philadanco! dancers as well as a meet and greet with the company.

Events: Lighting Design Lecture

Brandon Stirling Baker, in collaboration with renowned choreographer William Forsythe, gave a lecture titled *The Choreography of Light*. Baker is an award-winning lighting designer working internationally in the areas of theatre, opera, and dance. Baker's recent collaborations include new works by Justin Peck, William Forsythe, Amy Hall Garner, Savion Glover, Sufjan Stevens, Jamar Roberts, Michelle Dorrance, Pam Tanowitz.



Dancing to Connect

Vassar students are dancing with Poughkeepsie High School students in Dancing to Connect, a course developed by Battery Dance Company that builds connections through dance improvisation. In December, they will perform a program of their original choreography for the high school and Vassar communities.

